



Marsino's helps Halloween gang put on a different face ... or two

By Donna S. Nickel
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Anthrax ... hijackings ... terrorism ... those fears are as real as things get.

But with Halloween approaching as rapidly as a witch on a broomstick, there's also the fun kind of fear – the kind that comes from good, old-fashioned, scary Halloween fun.

With traditional trick-or-treating just days off, the question of the week being heard from schoolyards to office water coolers is “So, what are you going to be for Halloween?”

For great ideas, all you need is a computer and a comfortable chair as you browse the thousands of Halloween Web sites.

Type in the words “Halloween Costume Ideas” and you have your choice of 6,215 different sites.

While some of the sites have costumes to purchase, others simply offer unique costume suggestions, often accompanied by the “how-to” directions.

How about Seigfried and Roy – glitzy costumes, a hula-hoop and a stuffed white tiger?

Or, Mr. Potato Head with Velcro parts?

Or, an all-time favorite costume idea from the Internet – Tom Cruise in “Risky Business?” Every guy has the accessories: a white oxford shirt, a pair of underwear, white socks, dark sunglasses and a microphone. All you need is the guts to pull it off.

If you're not in a creative mood, or if you just prefer one-stop shopping, a trip to Marsino's Wholesale Novelty Co. in Perry Township might be a wise decision.

The store, at 5030 Tuscarawas St. W., has more than 1,300 square feet of Halloween paraphernalia.

Owner and manager Steve Marsino and his sisters, Marjorie and Maryann, are fourth generation costume vendors.

Marsino said that this year's hot ticket is patriotism.



IN THE MIDDLE – Steve Marsino, of Marsino's Wholesale Novelty Co., strikes a non-partisan pose with masks of President George Bush and former Vice President Al Gore.

(DAMON J. MORITZ/The Inde)

“The more patriotic the better,” he said. “Uncle Sam was our big seller this year. We purchased 24 costumes, and we’ve sold them all. We’re almost rented out of them, too.”

But, those longing to point their fingers at people and say “Uncle Sam Wants You!” need not despair. There are plenty of Uncle Sam hats and other accessories to make a believable costume.

Marsino said super heroes, such as Wonder Woman, Superman and Spider Man are even more popular than usual this Halloween season.

Some things you will not find on Marsino’s shelves are Arab, sheik and harem costumes.

“This isn’t the year for it,” Marsino said, echoing the sentiment of costume retailers across the United States.

The scary stuff, though, is as popular as ever.

Marsino’s has Freddie Kruger, Scream costumes and even everyone’s favorite cannibal, Hannibal Lector.

“Hannibal is a mask, and then you wear a straight jacket,” Marsino said.

Not to worry though, the straight jacket is only Velcro-closed, so when you’re ready to have something to eat or drink, you’re not in a bind.

There also are plenty of masks out there to make anyone a celebrity.

“Di and Charles are making a comeback this year,” Marsino said. “Rush Limbaugh, Queen Elizabeth, all of the World Wrestling Federation personalities, Jack Nicholson, Mimi from ‘The Drew Carey Show’ and countless others. They’re all still popular.”

While talking political party lines might be politically incorrect these days, some of the most high-profile politicians are still fair game.

“Our Florida mask is quite popular,” Marsino said. “It’s sort of the ‘undecided vote.’ It has George W. Bush on one side of the face, and Al Gore on the other.

“The president and the first lady are always in demand, and, surprisingly, so are Bill and Hillary. And the Richard Nixon mask, he’ll always sell.”

Creatures from that “galaxy far, far away ...” also will be seen around Stark County on Allhallow’s Eve.

“The Star Wars characters, especially those from the first episode, continue to be popular,” Marsino said.

For groups that want to haunt together, popular ideas include the Wizard of Oz characters, the Puttermans (otherwise known as the Duracell Battery people), the Three Little Pigs or Gilligan’s Island castaways.

Couples could make a date out of being the Crash Test Dummies, or Little Red Riding Hood and the

Big, Bad Wolf.

Marsino said last-minute costume seekers shouldn't panic.

"When they come into the store and they have to be at a party in an hour, the first thing we ask is if they want to be scary or not," he said. "Then we go from there."

The store offers accessories, prosthetics and makeup designed for quick costume needs.

"We sell something called 'Zombie Rot' that comes in a kit," Marsino said. "It has a makeup base like green latex paint with sand mixed into it. Then, you glue worms on so it looks like they're boring into your face. Twenty minutes, and you're done."

Marsino's, celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, is open 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday through Saturday noon-5 p.m. Sunday.

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